

Assembly?

Yes

The 18th General Assembly of the Kyodan will be held December 10-13 at Kowakien Hotel, Hakone, according to the decision of the General Assembly Preparation Committee, which met in Tokyo October 14-15.

The Eighteenth Assembly will continue in the dialogue format which characterized the 17th General Assembly, but it will also conduct an election for the executive committee, as well as the election of officers.

A summary of the remarks of Moderator Isuke Toda following the announcement of the 18th General Assembly appears on page four.

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— mission —

The widely divergent opinions of 20 members of the Commission on Mission and its sub-committees, representative of the divergency within the Kyodan, criss-crossed and occasionally converged during the Commission's Sept. 15-17 meeting. "At least everyone made his position clear" was one evaluation.

"Church and society" was the focus as the Commission attempted to take an overall look at mission and future mission policy. Realizing that no progress is made by a face-off between those who see evangelism as not involving social issues and those who see social concerns as constituting evangelism, the participants attempted to examine what has happened in specific instances, such as the Christian Pavilion at Osaka Expo '70.

Some supported the Exposition itself, some opposed it. Some gave moral support to the Pavilion, others felt it implied church support for the present policies of the government.

However, it was agreed that participa-

tion in the Pavilion should have been studied first by the Commission in Mission; there were also general agreement that the 15th General Assembly should not have voted on the Pavilion project without more deliberation.

Reporting on the results of the Laymen's Seminar held in August, the Rev. Nobuyuki Tajima said there was a feeling that the Kyodan should take a look again at Hendrik Kraemer's criticism, which "has never been taken seriously."

Kraemer called upon the Japanese church, whose history is only 100 years old, to assume a more pioneering stance and to bring forth forms appropriate for Japan. For instance, more emphasis should be put on the use of laymen.

Attention was also called to the Fundamental Policy for Social Action adopted by the 14th General Assembly in 1966. It was pointed out that too often discussions have proceeded without reference to this statement, which represents positions hammered out after years of study.

The full report on the meeting is being prepared for distribution later this month.

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Pastors at Retirement

Three hundred eighty-two Kyodan pastors and widows are receiving a small--but greatly welcome--increase in retirement income effective April of this year.

The increase is the result of a new plan drawn up for the Shaonkin (Thanksgiving) Fund of the Kyodan for pensions for pastors who served the church before the present participatory pension plan was established.

The plan, as the figures below show, is still very modest. The principle is to guarantee a certain minimum, based upon kotekinenkin (social security) and Shaonkin, and beyond that, to gauge benefits in relation to age and years of service.

Annual Minimum

	Shaonkin	Kotekinenkin	Total
Couple	¥250,000	120,000	370,000
Single	190,000	60,000	240,000
Widow	110,000	60,000	170,000

Benefits will be increased by at least 10% each year for the next five years, at which time the plan will be restudied.

Payments from the Shaonkin range from a low of ¥72,000 for a single person with 20 years of service to a high of ¥135,000 for 40 years of service, with couples receiving an amount that is approximately 30% above this amount and widows, approximately 55% of this amount.

THE NEW PLAN, which has as its goal a

Kyodan Pastors of Retirement Age

Age	Serving Churches	Retired
65-69	172	20
70-79	164	95
80-89	29	86
90 & over	5	15

One hundred seventy-eight pastors and 204 widows over the age of 65 constitute the 382 persons now receiving Shaonkin. (Thirty-eight retired persons are not receiving it.)

But in addition there are 370 pastors over 65 who are still serving churches, 18.5% of the total of 1,970 active Kyodan pastors. Or, by another slice of the statistical knife, 33% of all pastors over 65 years of age are still serving churches.

fund of ¥600,000,000 (US\$ 2 million*), is composed of contributions from the sale of

Kyodan property, special church offerings for the Shaonkin Fund, contributions by overseas churches, and individuals gifts.

Of the goal of ¥600 million, ¥260 million is now in hand and another ¥100 million has been promised. Of special help is the designation by overseas mission boards of funds from the proceeds of property sales in Japan.

*if ¥300 = US\$1

Women: study, concern

With a note of gratitude that "even though all the districts of the Kyodan can't get together, we can," 120 women from the sixteen districts met Sept. 11-13 for concentrated study of Paul's Letter to the Philippians and a sharing of concerns.

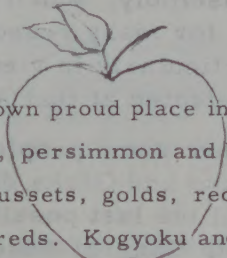
Particularly prominent in the "appeals" voiced by representatives of the districts were those on behalf of pastors' wives. The question of employment was approached from both ends of the pole--some pastors' wives wish to have careers but feel unable to pursue them because of the image of the pastor's wife held by many churches; others feel compelled to work, whether they want to or not, because of their husbands' low salaries.

One concern brought for the first time to the national meeting was that of sex education and how it should be approached. The Okinawa representative spoke movingly of the disruptive and destructive effects on Okinawan life caused by preparations for the 1975 Ocean Exposition. Other issues were the place of the "women's society" in the local churches, ties between sub-district and district, and district and Federation.

"Our aim was to study the Bible together in small groups, and if we did this we would not avoid the issues that are troubling the Kyodan," said Ms Toshiko Hayashi, secretary of the National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies. "There were many different opinions expressed and issues raised at various points during the three days. Unfortunately there was not enough time to allow us to take up fully in the context of our Bible study the 'appeals' made by various women. But all the participants returned to their districts and their daily life with a much wider awareness of the problems and feelings of other Kyodan women."

One by-product of the meeting is a plan for a fellowship of pastors' wives that can cope with the problems of those in isolated areas, living on subsistence incomes or seeking common support and understanding.

An Apple Story



The apple holds its own proud place in the colorful displays of mikan (tangerine), persimmon and banana in Japanese fruit shops. Deep russets, golds, reds tinged with yellow and polished bright reds. Kogyoku and Kokko, Fuji and Indo.

But this was not the case when John and Lucy Ing, missionaries of the Methodist Episcopal Church, arrived in Japan 100 years ago. After two years of evangelistic work in China they had been forced to leave due to Mrs. Ing's health and had stopped temporarily in Yokohama to visit friends.

It was there that Yoichi Honda, a young teacher, met the Ings and invited them to teach at To-O-Gijuku, a school in the northern city of Hirosaki. In December the Ings arrived in Hirosaki, after travelling three weeks by slow steamer and palanquin over the mountains. Both began to teach in the school and in their home.

Ing and Honda are reported to have been a dynamic team. In June of 1875, eight young men from the school, which had been founded in 1796 to educate samurai retainers of the Tsugaru clan, were baptized and became the core of the Hirasaki Church, organized the following fall.

One day Ing presented each of his Bible class students with a big red shiny sweet apple, the kind he had known during his college days in India. It was the first "apple" any of them had seen. All the boys--but one--ate their apples immediately.

The one who did not was Keisaburo Sato, who, so the story goes, hid his apple in his kimono, took it home and gave it to his father. His father, in turn, buried the apple in the ground to preserve it through the cold winter. When spring came it had germinated, and Japan had its first apple tree. (The Sato family now has some of the largest apple orchards in the area.)

Today apples are second only to rice in importance in the agriculture of northern Japan. The apple Ing introduced is known by the name Indo ringo (India apple), which is written with the character for India, the country. The name comes probably not from "India," however, but from "Indiana," one of John Ing's home states, whose climate resembles that of northern Japan. Ing is also known as the man who introduced tomatoes, asparagus, cabbage and gooseberries into northern Japan--although the Ings stayed in Japan only three years, returning to the United States in 1878.

This summer, on the 100th anniversary of the Ings' arrival in Japan and in recognition of their contributions to northern Japan, Aomori Prefecture brought two of John Ing's relatives to Japan for special ceremonies.

As for Yoichi Honda, he was elected the first bishop of The Japan Methodist Church in 1907. The Hirosaki Church, which during its history has sent more than 200 persons into Christian vocations, will celebrate its 100th anniversary next year. And the Indo ringo continues to "sweeten" the agricultural economy and the diet of fruit-loving Japan.

From informal statement made by Moderator Isuke Toda

to Kyodan staff October 16, 1974

The 18th General Assembly of the Kyodan will be held December 10-13 at Kowakien Hotel in Hakone.

Inasmuch as this General Assembly is in a sense a continuation of the 17th General Assembly, which was adjourned in the form of a recess, it is important, for many reasons, to convene it as soon as possible. This is true particularly in view of the fact that a new executive committee was not elected at that Assembly.

Although there are some people who say we are convening it too soon, because the Tokyo and Osaka district assemblies have not yet met, we have waited until the last possible moment. We believe that the convening of the 18th General Assembly may in fact make some small contribution to the convening of the assemblies in those districts, even as the 17th General Assembly has had some effect in both cases.

In the Tokyo and Osaka districts--in spite of the very different opinions held by various persons (beginning with those responsible for raising the issues), opposing groups are at least beginning to move from a posture of tairitsu (confrontation) to one of taiwa (dialogue). And a third district, Hyogo, plans to elect its Assembly delegates in mid-November.

The 18th General Assembly will continue the dialogue format which characterized the 17th General Assembly, but it will also elect a new executive committee, as well as officers.

It can also be anticipated that this Assembly will discuss heatedly the subjects of Expo '70, Tokyo Union Theological Seminary and Ministerial Qualifications. We do not anticipate that we will reach any conclusions. But no progress can be made in the present situation in which opposing groups refuse to have anything to do with each other. At least in the process of dialogue we may find some meeting ground, small as it may be at first.

We cannot solve all the problems this year, or next year, or the year after that--perhaps not until the end of time. But little by little, in the course of history, we will seek unity, neither continuing in independent parallel courses, nor existing in an unexamined unity, but through dialogue.

The question is how to enable this dialogue to take place. Our acceptance of the role of the problem posers is part of our effort to engage in this kind of dialogue on the way to unity.

Our aim then is to move toward unity through dialogue--not splitting off, not excluding anyone.